

Northern Rangelands Trust Support Project

What is the Northern Rangelands Trust?

The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) is an umbrella organization formed in 2004 by the LEWA Conservancy to bring together local pastoralist communities with land owners and the Government of Kenya to promote the long-term conservation of wildlife in Kenya's northern rangelands. At present, NRT oversees 19 community owned and managed conservancies covering over 3 million acres and representing 100,000 residents in one of Kenya's major wildlife migration routes. The largely pastoralist communities learn and practice wildlife conservation, natural resources management, and non-violent conflict resolution. In addition, they develop tourism and nature-based enterprises to preserve the northern rangelands and improve their livelihoods.



Northern Rangelands Trust artisan in Isiolo County

Project Duration and Budget

December 2008 – December 2012

\$3.3 million

Who implements Northern Rangelands Trust?

LEWA Wildlife Conservancy

www.lewa.org

Northern Rangelands Trust

www.nrt-kenya.org

Where does Northern Rangelands Trust work?

Laikipia, Samburu, Isiolo, Marsabit, Baringo/East Pokot, and Ijara Counties

What does Northern Rangelands Trust do?

The Northern Rangelands Trust community development model is truly community-led. The goals of each community conservancy are driven by each particular community's needs and aspirations. The NRT model

builds capacity in governance, financial management and security, which promotes independence and long-term sustainability.

Wildlife and Environmental Management

NRT assists the community conservancies to design and implement community conservation programs, improve rangelands conditions and improve livestock and water management programs. This includes building community capacity to resolve resource-based conflicts and improve natural resource governance. The NRT program assists the Kenya Wildlife Service with the immense task of conserving and managing Kenya's abundant wildlife, 80% of which exists outside of KWS-managed and protected areas.

Improve and Diversify Income

NRT promotes diversification of income base through ecotourism and nature-based enterprises to improve livelihoods and increase economic benefit for Northern Rangelands pastoralist communities. To date, community conservancies have attracted \$1 million in private sector investment in ecotourism.

Provide Security

One of the functions of a Community Conservancy is to institute security operations to provide stability to wildlife, residents and visitors to the area. Conservancy security teams are hired from the communities in which they serve and are networked and closely linked to KWS and Kenya Police.

How is NRT making a difference?

Kenya's wildlife attracts tourists from all over the world; making the industry the second-highest revenue earner for the country. The northern rangelands encompass one of the major wildlife migration routes and NRT's efforts are essential to ensuring wildlife conservation.

NRT's innovative approach has proven beneficial to Kenya's economy; it promotes the community management and conservation of the country's wildlife, while maintaining a healthy rangeland for pastoralists' livestock. \$2.5 million has been generated from community conservancies and nature-based enterprises to improve livelihoods.

Through the Northern Rangelands Trust:

- 131,000 hectares of communal land in the West Gate Community Conservancy have been set aside for

wildlife and pastoralism, preserving a habitat for the endangered Grevy's zebra. Herds of up to 500 are now regularly observed.

- In 2012, 246 young men and three women from Kenya's pastoralist communities graduated from the Kenya Wildlife Service's (KWS) elite Manyani Field Training School. The young pastoralists completed an intensive curriculum that has equipped them with the skills to play a major role in protecting Kenya's wildlife.
- 250 children are attending high school and university from 2010 earnings of Namunyak Wildlife Conservation Trust
- 300 community game scouts from 13 conservancies have been trained to collect information on wildlife and security threats across 12,000 sq. km
- The Samburu-Isiolo conservation area brings the highest revenue of any economic activity to the local authorities.

What key challenges does NRT face?

The long-term conservation of wildlife in Kenya's northern rangelands is inextricably linked to the fate of the local pastoralist communities. Yet these communities are politically and economically marginalized, and opportunities for economic growth have been hindered by insecurity and by longstanding ethnic rivalries in the region.

Northern Rangelands Trust in Action

Nolmekigi Lengilili, a 25 year old Samburu woman, has known poverty, insecurity, and hardship for most of her life. At the age of 18, she was married into a poor family. The only income she and her husband derived came from the five goats they owned. Looking ahead, Nolmekigi saw insecurity, poverty, and more hardship.

In 2006, NRT's West Gate Community Conservancy created NRT Trading to promote enterprise development among communities in NRT conservancies. Nolmekigi's life was about to change for the better.

Nolmekigi was among the first beneficiaries of NRT Trading. She participated in training and received a micro-credit loan and technical assistance to better develop and promote her products. She worked hard to build her small enterprise. Today Nolmekigi is one of the most successful women in the NRT Trading program. Her handcraft products are sold around the world and she is able to feed her family nutritious food and send her three children to school. She has repaid her loan to NRT Trading and is looking ahead to expanding her business.

With USAID funding, NRT built a borehole next to the river in Nolmekigi's village so Nolmekigi and her village mates no longer have to stand in long lines to fetch water

for their homes. That time can now be devoted to business. A new health clinic with refrigeration and solar climate control has opened in the village and now all of the village children have been vaccinated. The village school has reopened after years of insecurity. Nolmekigi's three children are enrolled in school and have a bright future ahead of them. The family now has 25 goats, a steady income, and access to security, education, and health care.

Today, NRT Trading works with 59 women's groups in five NRT conservancies, engaging more than 600 women in income-generating businesses. An additional 800 women have been trained in business development in seven community conservancies.

For more information:

www.lewa.org

www.nrt-kenya.org

Mike Harrison, Chief Executive Officer
Lewa Conservancy
Tel: +254 724 614 046
Email: mike.harrison@nrt-kenya.org

Elodie Sampere, Head of Conservation Marketing
Northern Rangeland Trust
Tel: + 254 (0) 20 203 3244
Mobile: + 254 (0) 727 341 612
Email: elodie.sampere@nrt-kenya.org

Beatrice Wamalwa, Activity Manager
USAID/Kenya
Office of Agriculture, Business and Environment
Email: bwamalwa@usaid.gov
Tel: +254 0721 371357

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NRT rangers marching in a field exercise at KWS' Manyani Field Training School.

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